

GLUCOCORTICOID INJECTION CHANGES

INFORMATION FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Glucocorticoid (GC) injections are commonly prescribed for the management of a variety of conditions where inflammation or anaphylaxis are cardinal clinical features.

ALL GC injections (e.g. cortisone) will be prohibited in-competition from 1 January 2022.

This change makes the classification of GC injections consistent with oral (systemic) GC administration.

In-competition GC injections

Athletes who require an in-competition GC injection may need a TUE before the GC is administered, depending on their competitive status. Athletes who require a TUE in advance will need comprehensive medical records relating to their treatment in order to apply. Athletes who don't require a TUE in advance should also receive comprehensive medical records relating to their treatment in case of a retroactive TUE application.

Out-of-competition GC injections

Athletes who require an out-of-competition GC injection do not need a TUE in advance. Instead, they should receive comprehensive medical records relating to their treatment in case of a retroactive TUE application.

Medical emergencies

In medical emergencies such as an acute asthma attack or severe allergic reaction, give any treatment necessary irrespective of TUE status.

Washout periods

If an injection is administered out of competition, there may be persisting presence of the substance in the doping control sample of an athlete because of varying GC washout periods.

WADA advises that the most commonly used GCs for injection have a washout period of between 3 and 5 days, but some, such as Triamcinolone, can be up to 60 days for intra-muscular injection.

We encourage physicians to avoid Triamcinolone due to its long washout period, and use other GCs where possible, unless there is a specific reason why Triamcinolone is clinically indicated.

Route	Glucocorticoid	Washout period
Oral	All Glucocorticoids; -----	3 days
	Except Triamcinolone acetonide-----	10 days
Intramuscular	Betamethasone; Dexamethasone; Methylprednesolone-	5 days
	Prednisolone; prednisone-----	10 days
	Triamcinolone acetonide -----	60 days
Local injections (including periarticular, intra-articular, peritendinous and intratendinous)	All Glucocorticoids; -----	3 days
	Except Triamcinolone acetonide; prednisolone; prednisone-----	10 days

Medical records

Medical records are necessary to support any TUE application. For GC administration, records should be prepared (and shared with athletes) for out-of-competition injections and in-competition injections. Records must include:

- a medical diagnosis where a GC injection is the recognised treatment;
- evidence that a permitted alternative was tried, unavailable or not considered the best treatment option;
- the date and specific GC given, dose and by what means (such as a copy of the radiologist report if the injection is given under ultrasound or X-ray guidance).

It might be difficult to identify the exact injection that contributed to an atypical in-competition test, which makes it vital that medical professionals practice good medicine with appropriate clinical record keeping. The more extensive the accompanying medical justification, the more likely it will be for the TUE application to be successful.